Bonanza

Bonanza is an American Western television series that ran on NBC from September 12, 1959, to January 16, 1973. Lasting 14 seasons and 431 episodes, *Bonanza* is NBC's longest-running Western, the second-longest-running Western series on U.S. network television (behind CBS's *Gunsmoke*), and one of the longest-running, live-action American series. The show continues to air in syndication. The show is set in the 1860s and centers on the wealthy Cartwright family, who live in the vicinity of Virginia City, Nevada, bordering Lake Tahoe. The series initially starred Lorne Greene, Pernell Roberts, Dan Blocker and Michael Landon and later featured (at various times) Guy Williams, David Canary, Mitch Vogel and Tim Matheson. The show is known for presenting pressing moral dilemmas.[1]

The title "Bonanza" is a term used by miners in regard to a large vein or deposit of silver ore,[2] from Spanish *bonanza* (prosperity) and commonly refers to the 1859 revelation of the Comstock Lode of rich silver ore mines under the town of Virginia City, not far from the fictional Ponderosa Ranch that the Cartwright family operated. The show's theme song, also titled "Bonanza", became a hit song. Only instrumental renditions, without Ray Evans's lyrics, were used during the series's long run.[3]

In 2002, *Bonanza* was ranked No. 43 on *TV Guide*'s 50 Greatest TV Shows of All Time,[4] and in 2013 *TV Guide* included it in its list of The 60 Greatest Dramas of All Time.[5] The time period for the television series is roughly between 1861 (Season 1) and 1867 (Season 13) during and shortly after the American Civil War, coinciding with the period Nevada Territory became a U.S. state.

During the summer of 1972, NBC aired reruns of episodes from the 1967–1970 period in prime time on Tuesday evening under the title ***Ponderosa***.[6]

Premise

Approximate location of the fictional Ponderosa Ranch, the home of Cartwright family. The map is oriented with North at the top (instead of East at the top, as in the map shown on the program).

The show chronicles the weekly adventures of the Cartwright family, headed by the thrice-widowed patriarch Ben Cartwright (Lorne Greene). He had three sons, each by a different wife: the eldest was the urbane architect Adam Cartwright (Pernell Roberts), who built the ranch house; the second was the warm and lovable giant Eric "Hoss" Cartwright (Dan Blocker); and the youngest was the hotheaded and impetuous Joseph, or "Little Joe" (Michael Landon). Through exposition[7] and flashback episodes, the viewer learns that each wife was accorded a different ancestry: English,[8] Swedish,[9] and French Creole[10] respectively. The family's cook was Chinese immigrant Hop Sing (Victor Sen Yung).

The family lived on a thousand square-mile (2,600 km^2) ranch called the Ponderosa on the eastern shore of Lake Tahoe in Nevada opposite California on the edge of the Sierra Nevada range.[7] The vast size of the Cartwrights' land was quietly revised to "half a million acres" (2,000 km^2) on Lorne Greene's 1964 song, "Saga of the Ponderosa". The ranch name refers to the *Pinus ponderosa*, (ponderosa pine), common in the West. The nearest town to the Ponderosa was Virginia City, where the Cartwrights would go to converse with Sheriff Roy Coffee (played by veteran actor Ray Teal), or his deputy Clem Foster (Bing Russell).

Bonanza was considered an atypical Western for its time, as the core of the storylines dealt less about the range but more with Ben and his three dissimilar sons, how they cared for one another, their neighbors, and just causes.

Bonanza	
Also known as	Ponderosa
Genre	Western
Created by	David Dortort
Starring	Lorne Greene Pernell Roberts Dan Blocker Michael Landon Guy Williams Victor Sen Yung David Canary Mitch Vogel Ray Teal Bing Russell Tim Matheson Lou Frizzell
Theme music composer	Ray Evans Jay Livingston
Opening theme	"Bonanza"
Ending theme	"Bonanza"
Composers	David Rose Walter Scharf Harry Sukman Fred Steiner William Lava
Country of origin	United States
Original language	English
No. of seasons	14
No. of episodes	431 (list of episodes)
Production	
Executive producers	David Dortort Mark Roberts

"You always saw stories about family on comedies or on an anthology, but *Bonanza* was the first series that was week-to-week about a family and the troubles it went through. *Bonanza* was a period drama that attempted to confront contemporary social issues. That was very difficult to do on television. Most shows that tried to do it failed because the sponsors didn't like it, and the networks were nervous about getting letters," explains Stephen Battaglio, a senior editor for *TV Guide* magazine.[11]

Producers	Fred Hamilton Robert Blees Richard Collins
Running time	49 minutes
Production company	NBC
Original release	
Network	NBC
Release	September 12, 1959 – January 16, 1973

Cast

Though not familiar stars in 1959, the cast quickly became favorites of the first television generation. The order of billing at the beginning of the broadcast appeared to be shuffled randomly each week, with no relation whatsoever to the current episode featured that week.

List indicator(s)

This section includes characters who will appear or have appeared in at least one season of the series.

- A green cell indicates the actor is a main cast member.
- A red cell indicates the actor is a recurring cast member.
- A light blue cell indicates the actor is a guest or special guest cast member.

Main cast

Performer	Character	Seasons													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Lorne Greene	Ben Cartwright	Main													
Michael Landon	Joseph "Little Joe" Cartwright	Main													
Dan Blocker	Eric "Hoss" Cartwright	Main													
Pernell Roberts	Adam Cartwright	Main													
David Canary	"Candy" Canaday									Recurring	Main		Guest		Main
Mitch Vogel	Jamie Hunter Cartwright												Main		
Tim Matheson	Griff King														Main

Recurring

Performer	Character	Seasons													
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Victor Sen Yung	Hop Sing	Recurring	Guest	Recurring											
Roy Engel	Dr. Paul (J.P.) Martin [a]	Recurring								Guest		Recurring			
Grandon Rhodes		Guest		Guest		Recurring				Guest					
Harry Holcombe											Guest	Recurring			
Ray Teal	Sheriff Roy Coffee		Recurring												
Bing Russell	Deputy Clem			Recurring		Guest				Recurring					

	Foster								
Guy Williams	Will Cartwright			Recurring					
Lou Frizzell	Dusty Rhodes					Guest	Recurring	Guest	

a. Roy Engel, Grandon Rhodes, and Harry Holcombe all appeared as a number of different doctors during the series. Most often, it was Dr. Paul Martin or Dr. J.P. Martin. Other derivative names included Doctor Martin and Doc Martin. Other credited names by the same actors included, Dr. Paul Kay, Doc Tolliver, Dr. Wayne, Dr. Harris, and Dr. Lewis

Episodes

Season	Episodes	Originally aired		Rank	Rating	Average viewership (in millions)	Timeslot (ET)
		First aired	Last aired				
1	32	September 12, 1959	April 30, 1960	—	—	—	Saturday 7:30 p.m.
2	34	September 10, 1960	June 3, 1961	17	24.8	11.7[12]	TBA
3	34	September 24, 1961	May 20, 1962	2	30.0	14.6[13]	Sunday 9:00 p.m.
4	34	September 23, 1962	May 26, 1963	4	29.8[a]	15.0[14]	TBA
5	34	September 22, 1963	May 24, 1964	2	36.9	19.0[15]	TBA
6	34	September 20, 1964	May 23, 1965	1	36.3	19.1[16]	TBA
7	33	September 12, 1965	May 15, 1966	1	31.8	17.1[17]	TBA
8	34	September 11, 1966	May 14, 1967	1	29.1	16.0[18]	TBA
9	34	September 17, 1967	July 28, 1968	4	25.5[b]	14.5[19]	TBA
10	30	September 15, 1968	May 11, 1969	3	26.6	15.5[20]	TBA
11	28	September 14, 1969	April 19, 1970	3	24.8	14.5[21]	TBA
12	28	September 13, 1970	April 11, 1971	9	23.9	14.4[22]	TBA
13	26	September 19, 1971	April 2, 1972	20	21.9	13.6[23]	TBA
14	16	September 12, 1972	January 16, 1973	50[24]	17.0[25]	—	Tuesday 8:00 p.m.

a. Tied with *The Lucy Show*
b. *Gunsmoke* and *Family Affair*

Background and production

Set and filming

The opening scene for the first season was shot at Lake Hemet, a reservoir in the San Jacinto Mountains, Riverside County, California, and later moved to Lake Tahoe. During the first season extra horses were rented from the Idyllwild Stables in Idyllwild, also in the San Jacinto Mountains. The first Virginia City set was used on the show until 1970 and was located on a backlot at Paramount and featured in episodes of *Have Gun – Will Travel*, *Mannix*, and *The Brady Bunch*. In the 1970 premiere episode of the 12th season titled "The Night Virginia City Died", Deputy Clem Foster's pyromaniac fiancée levels the town in a series of fires (reflecting a real 1875 fire that destroyed three-quarters of Virginia City). This allowed for a switch to the less expensive Warner studios from September 1970 through January 1973. The script was initially written for the departing David Canary's Candy, but was rewritten for actors Ray Teal (Sheriff Roy Coffee) and Bing Russell (Deputy Clem Foster), who rarely appeared together on the show.

The program's Nevada set, the Ponderosa Ranch house, was recreated in Incline Village, Nevada, in 1967, and remained a tourist attraction until its sale thirty-seven years later in September 2004.

It was partially filmed in Wildwood Regional Park in Thousand Oaks, California.[26][27][28]

Ponderosa tour postcard – visitors tour the replica ranchhouse and its big living room with stone fireplace overlooking the east shore of Lake Tahoe, in Incline Village, Nevada where several rebuilt ranch buildings were used as a set for outside filming

Costumes

From the third season on, the Cartwrights and nearly every other recurring character on the show wore the same clothing in almost every episode. The reason for this is twofold: it made duplication of wardrobe easier for stunt doubles (Hal Burton, Bob Miles, Bill Clark, Lyle Heisler, Ray Mazy) and it cut the cost of refilming action shots (such as riding clips in-between scenes), as previously shot stock footage could be reused. Below is a survey of costumes employed:

- Ben Cartwright: Sandy shirt, tawny leather vest, gray pants, cream-colored hat, occasional green scarf.
- Adam Cartwright: Black shirt, black or midnight blue pants, black hat. Elegant city wear. Cream-colored trail coat.
- Hoss Cartwright: White shirt, brown suede vest, brown pants, large beige flat-brimmed, ten-gallon hat.
- Little Joe Cartwright: Beige, light gray shirt, kelly-green jacket, tan pants, beige hat. Black leather gloves from 10th season on. In season 14, he and Greene occasionally wore different shirts and slacks, as the footage of them and the late Dan Blocker together could no longer be reused.
- Candy Canaday: Crimson shirt, black pants, black leather vest, black hat, grey/ pale purple scarf.

It was not unusual for Little Joe Cartwright and Candy Canaday to appear shirtless in various scenes involving manual labor.

The horse saddles used by the Bonanza cast were made by the Bona Allen Company of Buford, Georgia.[29]

Pernell Roberts, Dan Blocker, Lorne Greene and Michael Landon (1961)

Hair styles

In 1968, Blocker began wearing a toupee on the series, as he was approaching age 40 and his hair loss was becoming more evident. He joined the ranks of his fellow co-stars Roberts and Greene, both of whom had begun the series with hairpieces (Greene wore his modest frontal piece in private life too, whereas Roberts preferred not wearing his, even to rehearsals/blocking). Landon was the only original cast member who was wig-free throughout the series, as even Sen Yung wore an attached rattail- queue.[30]

Music

Bonanza features a memorable theme song by Jay Livingston and Ray Evans that was orchestrated by David Rose and arranged by Billy May for the television series. Members of the Western Writers of America chose it as one of the Top 100 Western songs of all time.[31]

The *Bonanza* theme song opens with a blazing Ponderosa map and saddlebound Cartwrights. The melodic intro, emulating galloping horses, is one of the most recognized television scores. Variations of the theme were used for 12 seasons on the series. Although there were two official sets of lyrics (some country-western singers, avoiding royalties, substituted the copyright renditions with their own words), the series simply used an instrumental theme. Three of the cast members bellowed-out the original lyrics, unaccompanied, at the close of the pilot (Pernell Roberts, the sole professional singer of the quartet, abstained and untethered the horse reins). Before the pilot aired (on September 12, 1959), the song sequence, deemed too campy, was edited out of the scene and instead the Cartwrights headed back to the ranch whooping and howling. In a 1964 song, the Livingston-Evans lyrics were revised by Lorne Greene with a more familial emphasis, "on this land we put our brand, Cartwright is the name, fortune smiled the day we filed the Ponderosa claim" ("Bonanza", Bear Family Boxed set, Disc #2). In 1968, a slightly revamped horn and percussion-heavy arrangement of the original score introduced the series- which was used until 1970. A new theme song, called "The Big Bonanza" was written in 1970 by episode scorer David Rose, and was used from 1970 to 1972. Action-shot pictorials of the cast replaced the galloping trio with the

order of the actors rotating from episode to episode, resulting in Blocker or Landon often getting top billing over Greene. Finally, a faster rendition of the original music returned for the 14th and final season, along with action shots of the cast (sans Dan Blocker, who had died by this point).

Cancellation

In the fall of 1972, NBC moved *Bonanza* to Tuesday nights – where reruns from the 1967–1970 period had been broadcast the previous summer under the title *The Ponderosa*[6] – opposite the *All in the Family* spinoff show, *Maude*, which was a virtual death sentence for the program. The scheduling change, as well as Dan Blocker's death in May 1972, resulted in plunging ratings for the show. David Canary returned to his former role of Candy (to offset Hoss' absence), and a new character named Griff King (played by Tim Matheson) was added in an attempt to lure younger viewers. Griff, in prison for nearly killing his abusive stepfather, was paroled into Ben's custody and given a job as a ranch hand. Several episodes were built around his character, one that Matheson never had a chance to fully develop before the show was abruptly cancelled in November 1972 (with the final episode airing January 16, 1973). Many fans, as well as both Landon and Greene, felt that the character of Hoss was essential, as he was a nurturing, empathetic soul who rounded out the all-male cast.

For 14 years, *Bonanza* was the premier Western on American television. Reruns of the series have aired on several cable networks such as TV Land, INSP, Family Channel, the Hallmark Channel and Great American Faith & Living.

Front to back: Pernell Roberts, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker and Lorne Greene

Themes

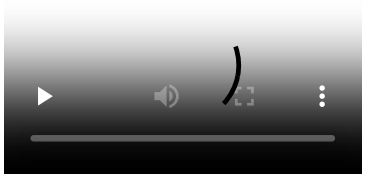
Episodes ranged from high drama[32] to broad comedy[33] and addressed issues such as the environment,[34] substance abuse,[35] domestic violence,[36] anti-war sentiment,[37] and illegitimate births.[38] The series sought to illustrate the cruelty of bigotry against Asians,[39][40] African-Americans,[41][42][43] Native Americans,[44] Jews,[45] Mormons,[46] the disabled,[47] and little people.[48]

Bonanza is uniquely known for having addressed racism, not typically covered on American television during the time period, from a compassionate, humanitarian point-of-view.

Philip Ahn in "The Fear Merchants"

Bigotry, including antisemitism, was the subject of the episode "Look to the Stars". A bigoted school teacher Mr. Norton (oblivious to his prejudice) routinely expels minority students. When he expels the brilliant Jewish student Albert Michelson, a scientific genius whose experiments on the streets of Virginia City often cause commotion, Ben Cartwright steps in and confronts Norton on his bigotry. Ashamed, the school teacher vows to reform. A coda to the episode reveals that Michelson went on to win the Nobel Prize for Physics.[45]

In the episode "Enter Thomas Bowers", the Cartwright family helps the opera singer Thomas Bowers, an African American freedman, after he encounters prejudice while in Virginia City to perform. Bowers winds up arrested as a fugitive slave. At the beginning of the episode, Adam is shown to be outraged at the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision (placing the time as 1857), which he discusses with his father.[41] According to David Dortort, sponsor General Motors was anxious about the episode. As producer, Dortort ensured that the episode re-aired during the summer rerun seasons, though two TV stations in the South refused to air it.



The season two episode "Day of Reckoning" shows the native population with nuance, as individuals have distinct motives and discuss ethical issues involved in working with or resisting white colonialism, at a time when racial subtleties like this were not common on broadcast television. The protagonist is Mexican actor Ricardo Montalbán.

In the episode "The Wish", directed by Michael Landon, Hoss protects an African American former slave's family when confronted with racism after the American Civil War.[42] In "The Fear Merchants", discrimination against Chinese immigrants who attempt to assimilate in American society is addressed.[39] "The Lonely Man" presents the controversial interracial marriage between the Cartwrights' longtime Chinese chef (Hop Sing) and a white woman (Missy).[40]

Release

Broadcast history and ratings

Initially, *Bonanza* aired on Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. Eastern, opposite *Dick Clark's Saturday Night Beech-Nut Show* and *John Gunther's High Road* on ABC, and *Perry Mason* on CBS. *Bonanza*'s initial ratings were respectable, often coming in behind Mason but ahead of the ABC lineup. Ironically, executives considered canceling the show before its premiere because of its high cost. NBC kept it because *Bonanza* was one of the first series to be filmed and broadcast in color, including scenes of picturesque Lake Tahoe, Nevada. NBC's corporate parent, Radio Corporation of America (RCA), used the show to spur sales of RCA-manufactured color television sets (RCA was also the primary sponsor of the series during its first two seasons).

Lorne Greene as Ben Cartwright

For Season 3, NBC moved *Bonanza* to Sundays at 9:00 pm Eastern with new sponsor Chevrolet (replacing *The Dinah Shore Chevy Show*). The new time slot caused *Bonanza* to soar in the ratings, and it eventually reached number one by 1964, an honor it would keep until 1967. By 1970, *Bonanza* was the first series to appear in the Top Five list for nine consecutive seasons (a record that would stand for many years) and thus established itself as the most consistent strong-performing hit television series of the 1960s. *Bonanza* remained high on the Nielsen ratings until 1971, when it finally fell out of the Top Ten.

During the summer of 1972, NBC broadcast reruns of episodes of the show from the 1967–1970 era on Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. under the title *Ponderosa* while also rerunning more recent episodes on Sunday evenings in the show's normal time slot as *Bonanza*.[6] In the fall of 1972, off-network episodes were released in broadcast syndication to local stations by NBC under the *Ponderosa* name. After the series was canceled in 1973, the syndicated reruns reverted to the *Bonanza* name.

Home media

A handful of early episodes have fallen into the public domain. These episodes have been released by several companies in different configurations, with substandard picture and sound quality, edited, and by legal necessity with the copyright-protected Evans–Livingston theme song replaced with generic western music.

Hoss Cartwright (Dan Blocker) with 19th century home media

In 1973, NBC sold its NBC Films syndication division, and with it the rights to the series, along with the rest of its pre-1973 library, to National Telefilm Associates,[49] which changed its name to Republic Pictures in 1984. Republic would become part of the Spelling Entertainment organization in 1994 through Worldvision Enterprises. Select episodes ("The Best of Bonanza") were officially released in North America in 2003 on DVD through then-Republic video licensee Artisan Entertainment (which was later purchased by Lionsgate Home Entertainment). Republic (through CBS Media Ventures, which holds the television side of Republic's holdings) still retains the syndication distribution rights to the series. CBS Home Entertainment (under Paramount Home Media Distribution) is the official home video rights distributor at present.

Starting in September 2009, CBS Home Entertainment (distributed by Paramount) has to date released the first eleven seasons on DVD in Region 1. All episodes have been digitally remastered from original 35mm film elements to yield the best picture and sound quality possible with current technology. CBSHE has released each season in two-volume sets (available together and separately). Each and every set contains exclusive multiple and rare bonus features, more than any other vintage long-running television series released on DVD. Classic series collections usually have bonus features included with the first season release only, if at all. On May 23, 2023, the remaining seasons 12, 13 and 14 were released on DVD, as well as a box set of the complete series containing all 431 episodes on 112 DVDs.

In Region 2, *AL!VE AG* released the first seven seasons on DVD in Germany between 2008 and 2010. These releases are now out of print as AL!VE has lost the rights. In 2011, StudioCanal acquired the rights to the series and have begun re-releasing it on DVD, and all seasons have now been released but have not been remastered.

Episodes of the series have also been officially released as part-works on DVD in France and the United Kingdom.

Bonanza "the official first season" was released in Scandinavia during 2010. The first season is released in 4 volumes. The first two volumes were released on October 20, 2010, and the second two volumes on April 27, 2011.

Addition: As of Nov, 24th 2017, the whole series was released on Region2-DVDs. ASIN:B075R74H2T

Region 1 DVD releases of *Bonanza*

DVD name	Ep #	Release date
The Official 1st Season, Vol. 1	16	September 15, 2009[50]
The Official 1st Season, Vol. 2	16	September 15, 2009
The Official 2nd Season, Vol. 1	18	December 7, 2010[51]
The Official 2nd Season, Vol. 2	16	October 11, 2011[52]
The Official 3rd Season, Vol. 1	18	July 17, 2012
The Official 3rd Season, Vol. 2	16	July 17, 2012
The Official 4th Season, Vol. 1	18	October 2, 2012
The Official 4th Season, Vol. 2	16	October 2, 2012
The Official 5th Season, Vol. 1	18	February 12, 2013
The Official 5th Season, Vol. 2	16	February 12, 2013
The Official 6th Season, Vol. 1	18	July 9, 2013
The Official 6th Season, Vol. 2	16	July 9, 2013
The Official 7th Season, Vol. 1	15	September 2, 2014
The Official 7th Season, Vol. 2	18	September 2, 2014
The Official 8th Season, Vol. 1	18	June 2, 2015
The Official 8th Season, Vol. 2	16	June 2, 2015
The Official 9th Season, Vol. 1	16	May 7, 2019
The Official 9th Season, Vol. 2	18	May 7, 2019
The Official 10th Season, Vol. 1	15	December 17, 2019
The Official 10th Season, Vol. 2	15	December 17, 2019
The Official 11th Season, Vol. 1	16	October 27, 2020
The Official 11th Season, Vol. 2	12	October 27, 2020
The Official 12th Season	28	May 23, 2023
The Official 13th Season	26	May 23, 2023
The Official 14th Season	16	May 23, 2023
The Official Complete Series	431	May 23, 2023

Region 2 DVD releases of *Bonanza*

Season	Release dates	
	Germany	Scandinavia
Season 1	December 8, 2011	December 20, 2010 April 27, 2011
Season 2	February 16, 2012	No release of seasons 2–14
Season 3	April 19, 2012	
Season 4	June 21, 2012	
Season 5	August 23, 2012	
Season 6	October 18, 2012	
Season 7	November 1, 2012	
Seasons 1–7	December 6, 2012	
Season 8	January 24, 2013[53]	
Season 9	February 21, 2013[54]	
Season 10	April 18, 2013[55]	
Season 11	June 6, 2013	
Season 12	August 1, 2013	
Season 13	October 2, 2013	
Season 14	November 21, 2013	
Seasons 8–14	December 5, 2013	

Region 4 DVD releases of *Bonanza*

DVD name	Ep #	Release date
Season 1	32	November 2, 2011
Season 2	34	February 8, 2012
Season 3	34	May 9, 2012
Season 4	34	October 3, 2012
Season 5	34	January 15, 2014
Season 6	34	February 10, 2016
Season 7	33	May 4, 2016
Season 8	34	February 6, 2019[56]
Season 9	34	August 7, 2019[57]
Season 10	30	March 18, 2020[58]
Season 1-4	134	November 18, 2020[59]
Season 11	28	February 17, 2021[60]
Season 12	28	August 23, 2023[61]

Other media information

Television movies

Bonanza was revived for a series of three made-for-television movies featuring the Cartwrights' children: *Bonanza: The Next Generation* (1988), *Bonanza: The Return* (1993), and *Bonanza: Under Attack* (1995). Michael Landon Jr. played Little Joe's son Benji while Gillian Greene, Lorne Greene's daughter, played a love interest. In the second movie, airing on NBC, a one-hour retrospective was done to introduce the drama. It was hosted by both Michael Landon Jr. and Dirk Blocker, who looks and sounds almost exactly like his father, Dan Blocker, albeit without his father's towering height. According to the magazine *TV Guide*, producer David Dortort told Blocker he was too old to play the Hoss scion, but gave him the role of an unrelated newspaper reporter. Clips of the younger Blocker's appearance and voice were heavily used in advertisements promoting the "second generation" theme, perhaps misleading audiences to believe that Blocker was playing Hoss' heir. Hoss' son Josh was born out of wedlock, as it is explained that

Hoss drowned without knowing his fiancée was pregnant. Such a storyline might have been problematic in the original series. (*The Big Valley*, however, had a major character in Heath, who was presented as illegitimate.) The *Gunsmoke* movies of the early 1990s employed a similar theme when Marshal Matt Dillon learned he had sired Michael Learned's character's daughter in a short-lived romance. The initial story was first introduced in 1973, when depiction of fornication courted protests, so CBS insisted their hero Matt have the encounter when he had amnesia. As was the style of television Westerns, gunfights played a major role in the movies which featured notoriously inaccurate shooting as well as unlimited ammunition.

Prequel

In 2001, there was an attempt to revive the *Bonanza* concept with a prequel, *Ponderosa* – not to be confused with the 1972 summer reruns under the same title[6] – with a pilot directed by Simon Wincer and filmed in Australia. Covering the time when the Cartwrights first arrived at the Ponderosa, when Adam and Hoss were teenagers and Joe a little boy, the series lasted 20 episodes and featured less gunfire and brawling than the original. *Bonanza* creator David Dortort approved PAX TV (now Ion TV)'s decision to hire Beth Sullivan, formerly of *Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman*, which some believe gave the series more depth as well as a softer edge. The Hop Sing character is depicted not only as a cook but also a family counselor and herbal healer. The series takes place in Nevada Territory in 1849, which is actually an anachronism. The Nevada Territory did not split from the Utah Territory until 1861, meaning that until at least the 5th season (the episode "Enter Thomas Bowers" establishes that year as 1857), *Bonanza* is also set in what in real life would have been Utah Territory.

Bonanza merchandise

Pernell Roberts as Adam in "The Hopefuls"

Bonanza has had a highly profitable merchandising history. Currently, Bonanza Ventures, Inc. grants merchandising and licensing rights worldwide. The original series has spawned several successful novelty western/folk albums from 1962 to 1965 including "Bonanza, Christmas on the Ponderosa" which charted at #35 on *Billboard*'s Christmas Record album chart;[62] three dozen Dell and Gold Key comic books from 1962 through 1970; a short-lived comic book adaptation by Dutch comics artist Hans G. Kresse between 1965 and 1966,[63] Jim Beam Whiskey Ponderosa Ranch decanters 1964–1966; a series of "Big-Little" books from 1966 to 1969; Revel Bonanza model character sets from 1966 to 1968; a chain of Bonanza and Ponderosa steakhouses from 1963–present; the Lake Tahoe-based "Ponderosa" theme park from 1967 to 2004; a line of American Character action figures in 1966–1967; Aladdin lunch buckets and thermos bottles in 1966–1968; View Master slide sets in 1964, 1971; Ponderosa tin cups from 1967 to 2004; a series of Hamilton collector plates in 1989–1990; and most recently, Breyer Fiftieth Anniversary Ponderosa Stable sets, with horses and Cartwright figures in 2009–2011.

Fourteen *Bonanza* novels have been published:

- *Bonanza: A Novel* by Noel Loomis (1960);
- *Bonanza: One Man With Courage* by Thomas Thompson (1966);
- *Bonanza: Killer Lion* by Steve Frazee (1966);
- *Bonanza: Treachery Trail* by Harry Whittington (1968);
- *Winter Grass* by Dean Owen (1968);
- *Ponderosa Kill* by Dean Owen (1968);
- *The Pioneer Spirit* by Stephen Calder (1988);
- *The Ponderosa Empire* by Stephen Calder (1991);
- *Bonanza: The High Steel Hazard* by Stephen Calder (1993);
- *Journey of the Horse* by Stephen Calder (1993);
- *The Money Hole* by Stephen Calder (1993);
- *The Trail to Timberline* by Stephen Calder (1994);
- *Bonanza: Felling of the Sons* by Monette L. Bebow-Reinhard (2005),
- *Bonanza: Mystic Fire* by Monette L. Bebow-Reinhard (2009).

There is also a collection of Bonanza stories: *The Best of Bonanza World: A Book of Favorite Stories*, published by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (2012), and in the late 1960s-early 1970s, Whitman Books published several hardcover novels aimed at young readers, such as *Killer Lion* by Steve Frazer (1966). *Bonanza Gold* (2003–2009), a quarterly magazine, featured detailed information about the show, including interviews with guest actors and other production personnel, articles about historical events and people depicted in the series, fan club information, and fan fiction. All 14 seasons of the show (as of 5/2023) are available

on DVD, as well as 31 non-successive public-domain episodes (with sans original theme music). The public domain episodes consist of the last 14 episodes of season one, and the first 17 episodes of season two. Additionally, the prequel series, *The Ponderosa*, as well as the three sequel movies (see below), are all available on DVD.

Legacy

In the TV series *Maverick* episode "Three Queens Full" Bart (Jack Kelly) is blackmailed by Joe Wheelwright (Jim Backus), owner of the Subrosa ranch, into escorting mail order brides for Wheelwright's three sons Aaron, Moose and Small Paul.[64]

Accolades

Awards and nominations

Award	Year[a]	Category	Nominee(s) / Work	Result	Ref(s)
American Cinema Editors (ACE) Eddie Awards	1964	Best Edited Television Program	Marvin Coil (for "Hoss and the Leprechaun")	Nominated	
	1970	Best Edited Television Program	Danny B. Landres (for "Dead Wrong")	Nominated	
Bambi Awards	1969	TV series International	Lorne Greene, Dan Blocker, Michael Landon and Pernell Roberts	Won	
Golden Globe Awards	1964	Best Series—Drama	*Bonanza*	Nominated	
		Best TV Star—Male	Lorne Greene	Nominated	
Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Awards	1962	Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography for Television	Haskell Boggs and Walter Castle	Nominated	[65]
	1963	Outstanding Achievement in Art Direction and Scenic Design	Earl Hedrick (scenic designer) and Hal Pereira (art director)	Nominated	[65]
	1965	Outstanding Individual Achievements in Entertainment—Cinematographer	Haskell Boggs and William Whitley	Nominated	[65]
		Outstanding Individual Achievements in Entertainment—Color Consultant	Edward Ancona	Won	[65]
	1966	Outstanding Dramatic Series	David Dortort (producer)	Nominated	[65]
		Individual Achievements in Music—Composition	David Rose	Nominated	[65]
		Individual Achievements in Cinematography—Cinematography	Haskell Boggs and William F. Whitley	Nominated	[65]
		Individual Achievements in Cinematography—Special	Edward Ancona (color coordinator)	Nominated	[65]
		Individual Achievements in Film Editing	Marvin Coil, Everett Douglas and Ellsworth Hoagland	Won	[65]
	1967	Individual Achievements in Cinematography—Cinematography	Haskell Boggs and William F. Whitley	Nominated	[65]
	1971	Outstanding Achievement in Music Composition—For a Series or a Single Program of a Series (First Year of Music's Use Only)	David Rose (for "The Love Child")	Won	[65]
		Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography for Entertainment Programming—For a Series or a Single Program of a Series	Ted Voigtlander (for "The Love Child")	Nominated	[65]
Troféu Imprensa Awards	1965	Best Series (Melhor Série)	*Bonanza*	Won	
	1966	Best Series (Melhor Série)	*Bonanza*	Nominated	
TV Land Icon Awards	2003	Best in the West	*Bonanza*	Won	
	2006	Favorite Made-for-TV Maid	Victor Sen Yung	Nominated	
TV Week Logie Awards	1964	Best Overseas Show (Australia)	*Bonanza*	Won	[66]
Western Heritage Awards	1970	Bronze Wrangler Award for Fictional Television Drama	David Dortort, Michael Landon, Richard Collins, Lorne Greene, Dan Blocker, Ossie Davis, Roy Jenson, Harrison Page, Barbara Parrio, George Spell and Jerry Summers (for "The Wish")	Won	[67]
Writers Guild of America (WGA) Awards	1961	Episodic, Longer than 30 Minutes in Length	Donald S. Sanford (for "The Last Hunt")	Nominated	

a. Indicates the year of ceremony. Each year is linked to the article about the awards held that year, wherever possible.

Other honors

Year	Organization	Title	Notes	Ref(s)
2011	Online Film & Television Association (OFTA)	Television Hall of Fame: Productions	Inductee	[68]

See also

- 1959 in television

Citations

1. "Bonanza Television Show – ONE" (https://web.archive.org/web/20210308104217/https://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/bonanza-television-show). *www.onlinenevada.org*. Archived from the original (http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/bonanza-television-show) on March 8, 2021. Retrieved November 21, 2016.
2. "Bonanza – Definition and More from the Free Merriam-Webster Dictionary" (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/bonanza). Merriam-webster.com. Retrieved March 7, 2012.
3. "Bonanza Lyrics and Theme" (http://ponderosascenery.homestead.com/lyrics.html). *ponderosascenery.homestead.com*.
4. "TV Guide Names Top 50 Shows" (http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2002/04/26/entertainment/main507388.shtml). Cbsnews.com. Retrieved March 7, 2012.
5. Roush, Matt (February 25, 2013). "Showstoppers: The 60 Greatest Dramas of All Time". *TV Guide*. pp. 16–17.
6. Brooks, Tim, and Earle Marsh, *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946–Present (Sixth Edition)*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1995, ISBN 0-345-39736-3, p. 123.
7. "A Rose for Lotta". *Bonanza*. Season 1. Episode 1. September 12, 1959. NBC.
8. "Elizabeth, My Love". *Bonanza*. Season 2. Episode 33. May 27, 1961. NBC.
9. "Inger, My Love". *Bonanza*. Season 3. Episode 29. April 15, 1962. NBC.
10. "Marie, My Love". *Bonanza*. Season 4. Episode 20. February 10, 1963. NBC.
11. Cohn, Paulette (May 24, 2009). "*Bonanza*, a 1960s TV Show Ahead of the Times" (http://americanprofile.com/articles/bonanza-1960s-tv-show/). *American Profile*. Retrieved May 20, 2016.
12. "TV Ratings: 1960-1961" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1960.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
13. "TV Ratings: 1961-1962" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1961.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
14. "TV Ratings: 1962-1963" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1962.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
15. "TV Ratings: 1963-1964" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1963.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
16. "TV Ratings: 1964-1965" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1964.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
17. "TV Ratings: 1965-1966" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1965.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
18. "TV Ratings: 1966-1967" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1966.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
19. "TV Ratings: 1967-1968" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1967.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
20. "TV Ratings: 1968-1969" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1968.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
21. "TV Ratings: 1969-1970" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1969.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
22. "TV Ratings: 1970-1971" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1970.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
23. "TV Ratings: 1971-1972" (https://classictvguide.com/tvratings/1971.htm). *classictvguide.com*. Retrieved October 11, 2023.
24. "The TV Ratings Guide: 1972-73 Ratings History" (http://www.thetvratingsguide.com/2020/02/1972-73-ratings-history.html).

25. "The TV Ratings Guide: 1972-73 Ratings History" (http://www.thetvratingsguide.com/2020/02/1972-73-ratings-history.html).
26. Schad, Jerry (2009). *Los Angeles County: A Comprehensive Hiking Guide*. Wilderness Press. Pages 35–36. ISBN 9780899976396.
27. Stone, Robert (2011). *Day Hikes Around Ventura County*. Day Hike Books. Page 216. ISBN 9781573420624.
28. Maxwell, Thomas J. (2000). *Hiking In Wildwood Regional Park: Natural History, Folklore, and Trail Guide*. California Lutheran University. Page 2.
29. Estep, Tyler. "Flashback photos: Buford was once home to the country's most prolific tannery" (https://www.ajc.com/news/local/flashback-photos-buford-was-once-home-the-country-most-prolific-tannery/k88cgTUiYACiPDwnYlyXBK/). *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.
30. Michael Landon, "The Tonight Show", NBC-TV, March 10, 1983
31. Western Writers of America (2010). "The Top 100 Western Songs" (https://web.archive.org/web/20101019002745/http://americancowboy.com/culture/top-100-western-songs). American Cowboy. Archived from the original (http://www.americancowboy.com/culture/top-100-western-songs) on October 19, 2010.
32. "Bushwhacked". *Bonanza*. Season 13. Episode 3. October 3, 1971. NBC.
    "Shanklin". *Bonanza*. Season 13. Episode 20. February 13, 1972. NBC.
33. "Hoss and the Leprechauns". *Bonanza*. Season 5. Episode 12. December 22, 1963. NBC.
    "Mrs. Wharton and the Lesser Breeds". *Bonanza*. Season 10. Episode 17. January 19, 1969. NBC.
    "Caution, Easter Bunny Crossing". *Bonanza*. Season 11. Episode 25. March 29, 1970. NBC.
34. "Different Pines, Same Wind". *Bonanza*. Season 10. Episode 1. September 15, 1968. NBC.
35. "The Hidden Enemy". *Bonanza*. Season 14. Episode 10. November 28, 1972. NBC.
36. "First Love". *Bonanza*. Season 14. Episode 13. December 26, 1972. NBC.
37. "The Weary Willies". *Bonanza*. Season 12. Episode 3. September 27, 1970. NBC.
38. "Love Child". *Bonanza*. Season 12. Episode 9. November 8, 1970. NBC.
    "Rock-A-Bye Hoss". *Bonanza*. Season 13. Episode 4. October 10, 1971. NBC.
39. "The Fear Merchants". *Bonanza*. Season 1. Episode 20. January 30, 1960. NBC.
40. "The Lonely Man". *Bonanza*. Season 13. Episode 15. January 2, 1972. NBC.
41. "Enter Tom Bowers". *Bonanza*. Season 5. Episode 30. April 26, 1964. NBC.
42. "The Wish". *Bonanza*. Season 10. Episode 23. March 9, 1969. NBC.
43. "Child". *Bonanza*. Season 10. Episode 2. September 22, 1968. NBC.
44. "The Underdog". *Bonanza*. Season 6. Episode 12. December 13, 1964. NBC.
    "Terror at 2:00". *Bonanza*. Season 12. Episode 23. March 7, 1971. NBC.
45. "Look to the Stars". *Bonanza*. Season 3. Episode 26. March 18, 1962. NBC.
46. "The Pursued". *Bonanza*. Season 8. Episode 4–5. October 2–9, 1966. NBC.
47. "Tommy". *Bonanza*. Season 8. Episode 14. December 18, 1966. NBC.
48. "It's a Small World". *Bonanza*. Season 11. Episode 14. January 1, 1970. NBC.
49. "Sale of NBC Films completes exodus of networks from syndication" (https://worldradiohistory.com/hd2/IDX-Business/Magazines/Archive-BC-IDX/73-OCR/1973-02-12-BC-OCR-Page-0013.pdf) (PDF). *Broadcasting*. February 12, 1973. Retrieved August 25, 2021.
50. "Bonanza DVD news: Box Art for Bonanza – The Official 1st Season, Volume 1 and Bonanza – The Official 1st Season, Volume 2" (https://web.archive.org/web/20120517150903/http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-1-Box-Art/12194). TVShowsOnDVD.com. Archived from the original (http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-1-Box-Art/12194) on May 17, 2012. Retrieved July 13, 2012.
51. "Bonanza DVD news: Announcement for Bonanza – The Official 2nd Season, Vol. 1" (https://web.archive.org/web/20120123060134/http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-2-Volume-1/14462). TVShowsOnDVD.com. Archived from the original (http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-2-Volume-1/14462) on January 23, 2012. Retrieved March 7, 2012.
52. "Bonanza DVD news: Announcement for Bonanza – The Official 2nd Season, Vol. 2" (https://web.archive.org/web/20120429105052/http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-2-Volume-2/15674). TVShowsOnDVD.com. Archived from the original (http://www.tvshowsondvd.com/news/Bonanza-Season-2-Volume-2/15674) on April 29, 2012. Retrieved March 7, 2012.
53. "Bonanza – Die komplette 8. Staffel [9 DVDs]: Amazon.de: Lorne Greene, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker, Ray Evans: Filme & TV" (https://www.amazon.de/Bonanza-Season-8-Lorne-Greene/dp/B009TKJD0K/ref=pd_sim_d_3). Amazon.de. January 30, 2013. Retrieved February 16, 2013.
54. "Bonanza – Die komplette 9. Staffel [9 DVDs]: Amazon.de: Lorne Greene, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker, Ray Evans: Filme & TV" (https://www.amazon.de/Bonanza-Season-9-DVDs/dp/B00AAPW9MC/ref=sr_1_5?s=dvd&ie=UTF8&qid=1356635555&sr=1-5). Amazon.de. December 13, 2012. Retrieved February 16, 2013.

55. "Bonanza – Die komplette 10. Staffel [8 DVDs]: Amazon.de: Lorne Greene, Michael Landon, Dan Blocker, Victor Sen Yung: Filme & TV" (https://www.amazon.de/Bonanza-Die-komplette-Staffel-DVDs/dp/B00B1NJD8A/ref=sr_1_2?s=dvd&ie=UTF8&qid=1359510670&sr=1-2). Amazon.de. Retrieved February 16, 2013.
56. "Bonanza - Season 8" (https://www.jbhifi.com.au/products/bonanza-season-8-1965-dvd). *JB Hi-Fi*. Retrieved December 2, 2020.
57. "Bonanza - Season 9" (https://www.jbhifi.com.au/products/bonanza-season-9-1965-dvd). *JB Hi-Fi*. Retrieved December 2, 2020.
58. "Bonanza - The Official Tenth Season" (https://www.jbhifi.com.au/products/bonanza-the-official-tenth-season-1965-dvd). *JB Hi-Fi*. Retrieved December 2, 2020.
59. "Bonanza - Season 1-4" (https://www.jbhifi.com.au/products/bonanza-season-1-4-1959-dvd). *JB Hi-Fi*. Retrieved December 2, 2020.
60. "Bonanza : The Official Eleventh Season - DVD" (https://www.madman.com.au/catalogue/view/55846/bonanza-the-official-eleventh-season). *Madman Entertainment*. Retrieved December 2, 2020.
61. "Bonanza: The Official Twelfth Season | Via Vision Entertainment" (https://viavision.com.au/shop/bonanza-the-official-twelfth-season/). *viavision.com.au*. Retrieved July 23, 2023.
62. "Christmas Records." Billboard, vol. 75, no. 51, December 21, 1963, p. 7. worldradiohistory.com.
63. "Hans G. Kresse" (https://www.lambiek.net/artists/k/kresse.htm). *lambiek.net*.
64. Brooks, Tim, and Marsh, Earle (2003). *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows* (https://archive.org/details/completedirector0006broo/page/755). New York: Ballantine Books. pp. 755 (https://archive.org/details/completedirector0006broo/page/755). ISBN 0-345-39736-3.
65. "Television Academy Emmy Awards & Nominations—Bonanza" (https://web.archive.org/web/20220326182806/https://www.emmys.com/shows/bonanza). *emmys.com*. Archived from the original (https://www.emmys.com/shows/bonanza) on March 26, 2022. Retrieved November 1, 2022.
66. "Australian Television Information Archive Logie Awards" (https://web.archive.org/web/20221020213906/http://www.australiantelevision.net/awards/logie1962_65.html). *australiantelevision.net*. Archived from the original (http://www.australiantelevision.net/awards/logie1962_65.html) on October 20, 2022. Retrieved November 2, 2022.
67. "Awards & Halls of Fame // Western Heritage Awards" (https://web.archive.org/web/20221102235149/https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/collections/awards/wha/635no-title/). *nationalcowboymuseum.org*. Archived from the original (https://nationalcowboymuseum.org/collections/awards/wha/635no-title/) on November 2, 2022. Retrieved November 2, 2022.
68. "Television Hall of Fame Inductees: Productions" (https://web.archive.org/web/20221030050642/http://www.oftaawards.com/tv-hall-of-fame/television-hall-of-fame-productions-2/). *oftaawards.com*. Archived from the original (http://www.oftaawards.com/tv-hall-of-fame/television-hall-of-fame-productions-2/) on October 30, 2022. Retrieved November 2, 2022.

General bibliography

- *Bonanza: A Viewers Guide to the TV Legend* by David Greenland. 167 pages. Publisher: Crosslines Inc (June 1997). ISBN 978-0-9640338-2-5.
- *A Reference Guide to Television's Bonanza: Episodes, Personnel, and Broadcast History* by Bruce R. Leiby and Linda F. Leiby. 384 pages. Publisher: McFarland (March 1, 2005). ISBN 978-0-7864-2268-5.
- *Bonanza: The Definitive Ponderosa Companion* by Melany Shapiro. 176 pages. Publisher: Cyclone Books; illustrated edition (September 1997). ISBN 978-1-890723-18-7.
- Mavis, Paul (September 15, 2009). "Bonanza: The Official First Season, Volume 1" (http://www.dvdtalk.com/reviews/39220/bonanza-the-official-first-season-vol-one/).

External links

- *Bonanza* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0052451/) at IMDb
- Bonanza on TVGuide.com (https://www.tvguide.com/tvshows/bonanza/100065)
- *Bonanza* (https://archive.org/search.php?query=BONANZA%20AND%20collection%3Atelevision) at the Internet Archive
- *Bonanza* (https://web.archive.org/web/20160523004652/http://www.tvland.com/shows/bonanza) on TVLand.com
- *Bonanza* (https://web.archive.org/web/20050907204115/http://www.museum.tv/archives/etv/B/htmlB/bonanza/bonanza.htm) at the Encyclopedia of Television
- *Bonanza* (https://web.archive.org/web/20120414122237/http://www.fiftiesweb.com/tv/bonanza.htm) at Fiftiesweb.com
- *Bonanza* (http://www.episodeworld.com/show/Bonanza) at EpisodeWorld.com
- Bonanza: Scenery of The Ponderosa (http://ponderosascenery.homestead.com/)

- *Bonanza* Episode Guide (https://web.archive.org/web/20120130044005/http://www.tvgems.net/bonanza/home.html) at TV Gems

---

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bonanza&oldid=1183230463"